

# Ethical Conduct for Idaho PTE Teachers



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**Ethical Conduct for  
Professional-Technical Education Teachers**

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**Ethical Conduct for  
Professional-Technical Education Teachers**

**Introduction**

Teachers are entrusted with our most valuable resource, children. School children are the future of the state, nation, and world. Teachers have a responsibility to serve as ethical leaders in their schools and communities. There is a sacred trust between parents, teachers, and the community, that every effort will be made to provide a quality education in a safe and secure environment for all children.

However, in the past few years, this sacred trust has been broken by individuals who have engaged in questionable or unethical behavior. Teachers from all disciplines have been charged with unethical or even criminal behavior for acts that clearly violate common codes of ethics that all teachers vow to follow. This behavior, on the part of classroom teachers, school administrators, or school support personnel, leave the general public with a negative view of the entire education community.

All teachers, whether certified through traditional university teacher education programs or through alternative routes, probably learn and discuss ethics sometime during their academic preparation. However, there has been no formal, structured procedure for introducing and discussing proper ethical behavior for educational professionals. Community expectations and ethical behavior should be a regular topic of teachers meetings, inservice activities, and professional development workshops. Teachers should review their actions, classroom procedures, and teacher-student interactions to ensure that they meet accepted ethical standards for their school and community.

Professional-technical education instructors are not different from any other educational professional in Idaho schools. However, PTE instructors do interact with students, parents, community leaders in different ways than teachers of other academic subjects. PTE instructors regularly work with students, parents, volunteers, and business leaders outside of the normal school days and hours. PTE instructors often travel with students to leadership conferences and competitive events both in state and across the country. These extra-curricular activities may expose PTE instructors to questionable situations and possible unethical behavior. It is the responsibility of PTE instructors, and everyone associated with educational institutions to maintain an environment of ethical leadership and behavior in all situations.

The following handbook will review professional, ethical behavior and make suggestions for how teachers should conduct themselves as educational leaders for their school and community. The handbook will be divided into four main sections which include:

- ✓ Ethics, Morality, and Professionalism
- ✓ Teacher ~ Student Interactions
- ✓ Youth Protection
- ✓ Case Studies

### **Ethics, Morality, and Professionalism**

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines ethic as:

eth•ic \ˈe-thik\ n [ME *ethik*, fr. MF *ethique*. fr. L *ethice*, fr. Gk *ēthikē*, fr. *ēthikos*] (14c)

**1:** the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation **2**

**a:** a set of moral principles or values **b :** a theory or system of moral values (the present

day materialistic ~ ) **c** the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group

(professional ~ s ) **d :** a guiding philosophy

Webster's Dictionary goes on to define ethical as "conforming to accepted professional standard of conduct. Starrat (2004) in his book *Ethical Leadership* defines ethics as: "a study of underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles, and values that support a moral way of life" (p. 5). Starrat defined morality as the "living, the acting out of ethical beliefs and commitment" (p. 5).

In *The Ethical Teacher*, Campbell (2003) writes, "...the essence of professionalism is defined by the principles of ethics that govern not only the expected conduct of professionals but also the spirit of commitment and responsibility they embody as both individual practitioners and collective associates" (p. 103). One of the components to being an educational professional is pledging to live by an established code of ethics for the teaching profession.

### **Idaho Professional Educator's Code of Ethics**

Every teacher who is certified in the state of Idaho signs a statement that they have read and agree to the Idaho Professional Educators's Code of Ethics (Appendix I). This document includes ten principles that outline ethical behavior for educational professionals in Idaho.

In addition, most educators are members of the professional teachers unions or professional associations. Most of these organizations have established their own sets of ethical standards to which members must agree. The National Education Association (NEA) has a Code of Ethics which include two principles: Commitment to the Student and Commitment to the Profession (Appendix II).

More specifically, the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has their own Code of Ethics for career and technical education teachers. The ACTE Code of Ethics (Appendix III) includes two sections: respect of self and respect to others. A majority of the points relate to professional responsibilities. The only point that relates to ethical conduct of a CTE teacher is: The career and technical educator acts to safeguard the health and safety of students and colleagues against incompetent, unethical or illegal behavior of any person, whether student or colleague.

Campbell (2003, p. 103-104) addressed Codes of Ethics in *The Ethical Teacher* when he wrote,

Such official statements of ethical intent, it is hoped, both serve the public interest and provide guidance to the members of the profession. They exist to inspire confidence in the profession itself, and, even though they are not necessarily contractual in a legal sense, to symbolize a kind of moral contract between society and its trusted institutions.

In *Ethical Leadership and Decision Making in Education*, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) stated,

Other factors that play into the development of professional codes involve consideration of community standards, including both the professional community and the community in which the leader works; formal codes of ethics established by professional associations; and written standards of the profession (p. 24).

Teachers, school administrators, and educational support-personnel should annually review these documents and identify any ways in which they may be violating the code of ethics and engaging in unethical behavior.

## **Teachers' Ethical and Moral Responsibility**

Teachers have an ethical and moral responsibility to act in a professional manner in all situations. Some individuals feel like they can separate their professional behavior from their private actions. However, as a teacher, you are viewed as a leader within your community. Citizens and parents expect their child's teacher to maintain the highest standards of ethical behavior at all times, both during school and in their private actions on their personal time. Teachers' behavior outside of the school environment often affects how they are viewed by colleagues and the community and can have a life-long impact on their professional careers. One poor decision can cause a teacher to lose his/her job and sometimes their career.

Starratt (2004) discussed responsibility when he wrote, "Educational leaders are responsible to a variety of stakeholders: students, teaching staff, support staff, and parents, as well as district authorities, the school board, and the community at large" (p. 52). He went on to state, "Specifically, as an educational leader, he or she is responsible for cultivating a caring and productive learning environment within the school for all the students" (p. 55).

## **Teacher Behavior**

Due to the nature of the profession, a teacher is always under a microscope as to his/her behavior. Teachers are observed by their students, school administrators, colleagues, parents, and community members. They are viewed as leaders within the community. Whether it be at a school function, community event, or private social gathering, a teacher's behavior is always open to interpretation by whoever is observing.



As a result, teachers must always exemplify ethical behavior and carry themselves as the leaders they are expected to be. Behaviors teachers may want to take into consideration include:

- Social interactions with friends or family
- Physical altercations with others
- Practical joking and childish behavior
- Social relations with students
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages in public or private
- Abuse of prescription or illegal drugs
- Communications with students outside of educational settings
- Handling financial resources of student clubs, educational or community organizations

Each of the above behaviors relate directly to one of the ten principles outlined in the Idaho

Professional Educator's Code of Ethics:

Teacher Behaviors	Idaho Professional Educator's Code of Ethics Principle
Social interactions with friends or family Physical altercations with others	I. Abides by all federal, state, and local laws and statutes.
Practical joking and childish behavior Social relations with students	II. Maintains a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside the classroom.
Consumption of alcoholic beverages in public or private Abuse of prescription or illegal drugs	III. Refrains from the abuse of alcohol or drugs during the course of professional practice.
Communications with students outside of educational settings	IV. Exemplifies honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.
Handling financial resources of student clubs, educational or community organizations	V. Entrusted with public funds and property honors that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.

Above all, teachers must follow all federal, state, and local laws and statutes. This means that teachers, both in and outside of school settings, must be upstanding members of society who do not break any laws or find themselves in trouble with authorities. Some of the more prevalent behaviors in society that also affect educators include: domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and financial difficulties. Teachers must maintain quality personal and professional relationships at all times. Situations in teachers' personal lives too often affect how they carry out their professional responsibilities. While teachers strive to develop good teacher ~ student relationships they must be aware at all times that they cannot cross the line between professional responsibilities to be a caring adult to personal feelings for individual students.

**Practical Joking** - Many teachers use a disarming easy-going personality to develop rapport with students. Interpersonal communications with students is fine. Asking them about their interests, jobs, career goals, sports, etc. is perfectly acceptable for caring educators. However, many times teachers allow this behavior to develop into more personal interactions on a private level. Teachers may start by using practical jokes to attract student interest. Joking with students can break down the teacher~student relationship and lead to unethical behavior. It is important that teachers always maintain a distance from their students so that they are seen as role-models and professionals who will maintain discipline at all times, both in the classroom and outside of the school environment.

If the teacher~student line is crossed, many times it leads to the introduction of alcohol consumption, drug use, and even sexual relations between teacher and student. These issues will be addressed in more detail later in this handbook.

## **Teacher ~ Student Interactions**

From the time kindergartners enter school they develop relationships with their teachers. Throughout elementary, middle, and into high school students interact with dozens of teachers, school staff members, administrators, etc. on a regular basis. Most students find one or two teachers who really inspire them and can become a mentor during their high school years and even as they enter college, career, and adulthood. Most of these teacher~student relationships are very professional, uplifting, and inspiring. However, a few end up crossing the line between professional relationship to personal behaviors. It is these few that often times involve criminal behavior and end up in the news media and can result in trials and incarceration for the guilty party.

Therefore, it is important that all teachers understand professional ethical behaviors that will maintain the teacher~student relationship and help them to avoid awkward and/or unethical situations. The following sections will deal with common aspects of the educational environment which, if not handled in an ethical manner, can lead to problems.

### **Communicating with Students**

Communication between teachers and students is vital to the teaching and learning process. Teachers must maintain open lines of communication at all times with their students, advises, club officers and members, colleagues within the school, citizens in the community, and most of all parents. Modern technology has allowed improved and efficient methods of communication between teachers and other individuals in the school setting. If used properly, these new methods of communication can improve education, help to avoid mis-interpretation of assignments, grades,

improve student behaviors, promote student growth, and lead to future educational opportunities. However, if used improperly, modern communication tools can make it easier to develop inappropriate relationships between teachers and students.

**Email** - The past 20 years has seen an explosion in the use of email communications. Nowadays, every teacher, school staff member, administrator, parent, and most students have their own email accounts. Email listservs can be used to communicate to an entire class, club, department, or teacher group in an instant. However, if not used in a professional manner, email can become a vehicle to unethical communications.

Teachers utilize email communications to inform others about many things including:

- X Class assignments
- X Field Trips
- X Behavior problems
- X Grade issues
- X Club activities
- X Sports events

Teachers must remember that all email communication is a record of your interactions with other individuals. Email communication is too often seen as a quick and easy method of communicating, when it should be viewed as an electronic form of a written professional memo or letter. Teachers should approach the use of email as a computer generated, electronically-delivered, note, memo, or business letter. The following are suggestions for the use of email communications in professional settings:

- ☐ Teachers should use their school assigned email address for professional communications only!

- ☐ Teachers should maintain a separate email account, not associated with their school email account, for all personal communications.
- ☐ Email communications should be professionally written using correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.
- ☐ Teachers should only email individual students about school related issues such as class lessons, grades, missed assignments, etc.
- ☐ Teachers should copy parents on all communications with students.
- ☐ Teachers should avoid communicating with students about personal issues at all times.

Email communications are very often archived by the computer information systems used by educational agencies. Teachers should always assume that emails are permanent records of communications between the writer and the recipient of any email messages. Email communications have and will continue to be used as evidence of unethical behavior between individuals. Email can be an efficient and effective method of communication if used properly. However, it must be used in a professional and responsible manner.

**Cell Phones and Smart Phones** - In the past if a teacher wanted to contact another person they would sit down at their desks, in the school office, or at home, pick up the “land-line” and dial the individual to whom they wished to talk. Within the past 20 years, the introduction of cell phone technology has allowed teachers to have access to instant communications using their cell phones on their belts, in their purses, or brief cases. Recent innovations in smart phone technology has incorporated digital photography, Texting, web-browsing, etc. to these modern tools. Ess (2009) in his book *Digital Media Ethics* writes,








...cell phones equipped with cameras for taking both photos and videos can record us without our knowledge in what we would otherwise believe to be private, perhaps intimate, situations. The resulting videos can then be shared - either simply with friends, or on a far more public site such as YouTube. (p. 47)

While the introduction of smart phones to educational settings has improved communications, it has also led to unethical behaviors on the part of both teachers and students. Teachers should view their cellular “smart” phones as another tool that can be used to improve communications in their personal lives and professional careers. However, they should be knowledgeable on proper ethical standards for using cell phones for educational purposes.

One of the first issues with teachers using smart phones is allowing students to know the teacher’s cell phone number. Should teachers allow students in their classes to know their cell phone numbers and call them with questions, problems, etc? That is a critically important question. First and foremost, teachers must follow established school board approved policies for the use of cell phones during school and for school-related purposes.

In many cases, Career and Technical Education instructors interact with students through student organizations, on school-sponsored trips to leadership conferences and career development or competitive events. It is important that teachers are always aware of where their students are and what they are doing. Smart phones have allowed teachers and students to stay in contact and allow teachers to maintain a semblance of control and student supervision, even when they are not together in a group.

However, while cell phones can be used to improve communications with and supervision of students, they should not be used for personal communications unrelated to school activities. The following is an overview of ethical communications policies that teacher should follow related to the use of cellular “smart” phones.

-  Teachers should only give out their cell phone numbers in special situations.
-  Teachers should only use their cell phones to communicate with students about school-related issues or problems.
-  Teachers should never use their cell phones to communicate with students about personal issues or problems.
-  Teachers should never allow students to use their cell phones unless the teacher is present, the student is contacting their parent/guardian, and the teacher is monitoring the conversation.
-  Teachers should never allow students to use their cell phones to browse the web, text other people, or post comments or photographs to Facebook.
-  Teachers should never allow their students, club officers or members (Reporters) to use their cell phones to take pictures during school-sponsored trips.
-  If a student tries to communicate with a teacher about personal issues, the teacher should report the incident to their school technology officer and administrator immediately and not communicate with that student in the future.

**Tenting** - Modern cell phone technology now allows communicating via both oral and written methods. Cellular “smart” phones can be used for voice communications, email, and Tenting. Tenting allows cell phone users to send short quickly written text messages. Teachers can use Tenting to send reminders to students about assignments, tests/exams, club meetings etc.

However, many times Tenting is used to send short cryptic messages of inappropriate nature between two individuals. Teachers should avoid Tenting students. Tenting lends itself to very short, informal communications which often leads to informal, unprofessional, relationships between teachers and students. An example of how Tenting can devolve into inappropriate forms of communications is the case of “sexting.” Sexting is defined as “the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs, primarily between mobile phones.” Students who participate in “sexting” with photographs can be charged with distribution of child pornography while individuals receiving these explicit messages with photographs can be charged with possession of child pornography.

As a result of the inappropriate use of Tenting on cellular phones, teachers should be very careful in using this method of communication. Teachers may be advised to turn off their Tenting features on their smart phones or only use Tenting for personal communications with family and friends.

**Social Networking Services (SNSs)** - Social Networking Services (SNSs) are more commonly referred to as Social Media. Tavani (2011) in his book titled *Ethics and Technology* writes,

Today, many people, both young and old, interact in Web-based social networking services (SNSs), such as MySpace and Facebook, as well as in professional-oriented networking services such as LinkedIn. Some also participate in one or more blogs (Web logs), while others send instantaneous “news feeds” to friends in the form of “tweets” via a popular online service called Twitter (p. 330-331).



By far the most popular social networking service is Facebook. It is reported that as of May 2012, there are over 900 million active users of Facebook. While Facebook policy limits users to those 13 years and older, many youth younger than 13 years of age either falsify their registration information or use their parents' Facebook profiles.

Facebook users develop their own "profiles" and "friend" people with whom they want to communicate. While Facebook started as a social networking service for individuals, many businesses, organizations, high schools and universities are now using Facebook as a method of communicating with their students, alumni, faculty, staff, etc.

As with most other forms of technology, the positive benefits of the technology have to be balanced with the negative consequences. Facebook allows schools, school clubs, youth groups, etc. to instantly communicate with students and members. Facebook users can post meeting announcements, reminders, photographs, etc. However, the instantaneous nature of Facebook allows people to post comments that can often be deemed inappropriate, mean, and even viewed as harassment.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) write, "Rapidly advancing technology has only added to school safety problems with issues of cyber-bullying, social networking websites, and cell phones with instant messaging, Texting, and digital photo-sharing capabilities" (p. 157). Teachers and school administrators must work very hard to balance the benefits of using social networking services with the potential for inappropriate use that endangers students.

The following are recommendations for the ethical use of social networking services in educational settings:

- Teachers should be careful using Facebook or other social networking services. They should not post personal information, inappropriate messages, revealing information or questionable photographs.
- Teachers should work with their school information technology official and administrators to review school technology use policy and develop appropriate, ethical use policy for all computer technology.
- Student organizations and school clubs should develop policies for the use of Facebook and other SNSs to promote their activities. SNSs should only be used to promote clubs or organizations in a professional and ethical manner.
- Teachers who serve as club advisors must monitor all postings to SNSs by students, club officers and members.
- Teachers should not “Friend” their students or share personal or private information with their students.

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

School-sponsored trips can range from a local field-trip to a local business or attraction that lasts for a class period to an extended, multi-day trip to a national or international meeting or event. Students from kindergarten through high school participate in educational field-trips that supplement their classroom curriculum. High school youth groups and sports teams travel to regional, state, or national competitions. Student Club members travel to state-wide or national leadership conferences. Fine Arts groups such as school bands and choir groups travel to perform at both competitions and community celebrations such as parades and festivals. These are all school-sponsored trips that can significantly add to students’ cognitive, psychomotor, and affective development.

However, any time a school allows teachers and students to travel off the school grounds it introduces the possibility of inappropriate and unethical behavior on the part of teachers,

chaperones, parents, and students. The following is a review of accepted policy and procedures to ensure that these experiential learning opportunities are safe and secure events for all participants.

### **Trip Itinerary**

Any school-sponsored trip must have the prior approval of the school administration, and in most cases the school board. In many cases, local field-trips of short duration can be approved by the school administrator such as a Principal or Assistant Principal. Trips of greater distance or duration require considerable more planning and the approval of both school administrators, the Superintendent of Schools, and even the School Board.

No matter what type of trip is planned, the teacher is responsible for planning all the logistics related to the event. This could include:









- ➔ Obtaining school approval for the trip.
- ➔ Scheduling the trip with the officials at the destination.
- ➔ Registering the group if you are attending a conference or competitive event.
- ➔ Making any necessary lodging and meal arrangements for multi-day trips.
- ➔ Making any transportation arrangements with the school or private rental agencies.
- ➔ Identifying other teachers, school staff, parents, etc. who will serve as chaperones.
- ➔ Obtaining the necessary permission forms signed by parents.
- ➔ Outlining emergency procedures in case of injury, accident, or if a student must return home for any reason.
- ➔ Finalizing all financial arrangements for the trip.

The final trip itinerary and logistical information should be finalized at least 72 hours prior to departure. Copies of the itinerary and logistical information should be distributed to the parents/guardians of all students participating on the trip. Copies should also be given to all school

administrators who have approved the trip. Logistical information should include the cell phone numbers of all adults participating on the trip. Copies of the cell phone numbers may be given to students in case they get separated from the group or need to communicate with the teacher(s) or chaperone(s).

### **Lodging Arrangements**

Many school-sponsored trips require overnight stays at distant locations. Overnight stays require making lodging arrangements with hotels weeks or months in advance of the trip. The following are suggestions for making lodging arrangements during school-sponsored trips.

-  Place no more than 4 students per room. Rooms with two double-beds should be reserved for 4 students.
-  Record the room number and names of all 4 students staying in each room.
-  Request adjoining rooms on one floor of the hotel. This will facilitate easy room checks.
-  Teachers or chaperones should NEVER share rooms with students.
-  If a parent is serving as a chaperone, they may be allowed to share a room with their child. No other student should be assigned to share a room with a chaperone and his/her child.
-  At least one male and one female chaperone should be on all trips if students of both genders are participating.
-  All students should be informed of the emergency procedures in case of a fire or other emergency during the hotel stay.
-  All students should be given the room number and phone number for all chaperones on the trip.

- ✈ Room checks should be done at a set time each evening (e.g. 11:00 pm). Female chaperones should check female rooms and male chaperones should check male rooms.
- ✈ Chaperones should never enter a student's room unless there is an emergency.
- ✈ All chaperones should be at least 21 years of age. They should be a teacher, school staff member, school administrator, parent or someone else associated with the school. Chaperones should be approved by the school administration and/or school board prior to the trip. Criminal background checks may be required for all chaperones.
- ✈ Teachers, adults, chaperones, etc. should never enter a student's room. Any meetings, discussions, team practices should take place in a public area or hotel meeting room.
- ✈ Students should never enter a teacher, adult, or chaperone's room unless it is an emergency.
- ✈ Teachers should arrange with the hotel staff to block all paid movie channels, including adult entertainment channels, offered on hotel television networks.
- ✈ There should never be one-on-one private or closed door meetings between a teacher and a student. If there is a problem, the teacher should request the assistance of another chaperone/adult and meet with the student in a public area or hotel meeting room. Meetings should never be held in either the students room or the teacher/chaperone's room.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The detailed trip planning should include what procedures to follow in case of emergency.

Emergencies may include:

- ☹ Sickness of a student, teacher, or chaperone.
- ☹ Illness or accident of a student, teacher, or chaperone.
- ☹ Criminal behavior by a student, teacher, or chaperone.

- ☹ Consumption of alcoholic beverages by a student, teacher, or chaperone.
- ☹ Inappropriate behavior requiring a student to be sent home.
- ☹ Illness, accident, or death of a family member requiring a student to be sent home.

No matter what the cause, emergency situations require prompt action on behalf of the teacher and chaperones on school-sponsored trips. Teachers have the ethical responsibility to handle any situation in a calm, professional manner. In any situation, the teacher should follow the steps outlined by the American Red Cross by:

- ① **CHECK** on the situation. Obtain all the pertinent information about what happened. The nature of the sickness/illness, accident, etc.
- ② **CALL** - Call the appropriate authorities. If emergency personnel, first-responders are required, call 911 for police, fire, or emergency medical services.

Once immediate medical services have been obtained, you may have to:

CALL security for the hotel, event center, hosting organization etc.

CALL your school administrator to inform him/her of the incident.

CALL the student's parent or guardian (unless school administrators are going to do this step).

- ③ **CARE** - provide any necessary care required for the situation. This may mean taking the injured student to the local Critical Care Facility, hospital, etc.

Less severe injuries may be handled by a person trained in first-aid.

Students who are ill should be observed by an adult/chaperone at all times until their health improves.

In extreme circumstances, arrangements may have to be made for students to return home or parents/guardians to travel to the student's location to provide personal care.

If the incident relates to student behavior, the teacher may have to make arrangements to send the student home. This should not be done without the approval of the student's parent/guardian and school officials. In some cases, a chaperone may need to travel with the student for their safety.

### **Supervisory Project Visits**








In some situations, teachers work with students on experiential hands-on projects outside of the regular school classroom. This may mean visiting the student at their home, family farm/ranch, place of work, volunteer organization etc. These supervisory projects may include:

Situation	Participants	Location	Visit
School-based project	Student Teacher	School classroom School laboratory School campus Greenhouse Land laboratory Livestock facility	During school After school
Home-based project	Student Teacher Parent/Guardian	Student's home Farm Ranch	After school Evenings Weekends
Placement position at a business in the community	Student Teacher Employer Parent/Guardian	Student's place of employment	After school Evenings Weekends
Volunteer opportunity with a non-profit organization in the community	Student Teacher Supervisor Parent/Guardian	Community organization Non-profit organization	After school Evenings Weekends

Student developed experiential education projects are an important component of a student's knowledge and skill development. Experiential education and supervised experience projects have been a component of career and technical education for almost a century. These experiential projects/programs are usually supervised by a student's teacher, parent, employer, supervisor, etc. This supervision requires visiting the project site to interact with the student and give one-on-one individual instruction related to the project. Many schools employ career and technical education teachers on extended contracts of 10-, 11-, or 12-months to supervise student projects over the summer months when school is not in session.

Supervisory project visits require teachers to interact with students outside of the normal school day, school-setting, or even school-year. As with other school-related activities, supervisory visits must be approached in a professional-ethical manner to make sure that both teachers and students are protected from inappropriate behavior.

The following are suggested procedures to follow during supervisory visits to student projects.

-  Schedule supervisory visit at least 3 days in advance.
-  Confirm visit date and time with student, parent, employer, etc.
-  Never meet with student alone. You must have at least one other adult present.
-  The teacher should never transport a student in a vehicle unless a second adult is present.
-  Meet with the student, parents, employer, supervisor, etc.
-  Take photographs of the student and his/her project (livestock, crop, place of employment, volunteer assignments, etc.)
-  Complete a written report of the visit. Provide signed copies of the report to the student, parent, employer, and student file.



Supervisory visits to students' experiential projects can be a major component to career and technical education programs. Teachers can use these supervisory visits to encourage skill development and leadership skills for all students. If conducted in a professional-ethical manner, supervisory visits can promote a teacher's program and the entire school system.

## **Technology**

Tavani (2011) stated, "As we move forward into the twenty-first century, cyber and noncyber technologies are converging at a pace that is unprecedented....many of the ethical issues we examined...arose because of convergent aspects of computing/information and communication technologies." Earlier in this handbook, we reviewed the use of cellular "smart" phones and social networking services (SNSs) for communicating with students. This section will cover the use of other technology such as computers, tablets (IPads), digital cameras, video cameras, and internet access in educational situations.

**School Technology Policy** - No matter what the computer technology being used, teachers should make every effort to ensure that it is used for educational purposes and that all users abide by established school technology use policy. All teachers should work with their school technology officer to review and abide by technology use guidelines or policies adopted by school administrators or the school board. Most schools have now adopted these guidelines or policy statements that cover how computer technology should be used in the school setting. These policy statements can include guidelines on:

- Computer usage
- Internet access

- Digital photographs, video, or audio files
- Plagiarism

Teachers should be familiar with the school technology policy and review it on a regular basis with all students in their classrooms who use computer technology for educational purposes.

**Computers** - Computers have been used in educational institutions since they were introduced to society in the 1980s. In the year 2012, it would be hard to find a classroom without at least some computer technology or a school without one or more computer laboratories. Students from kindergarten through college utilize computer technology on a daily basis to aid their learning and skill development. Computers have revolutionized education in the world. Teachers, students, school officials, all use computer technology to make education more efficient and effective.

However, as with other technological advances, computer technology can be used for inappropriate activities by anyone who has access to the equipment and an internet connection. Computers can be in the form of desktop computers in classrooms and school laboratories, laptop computers used by teachers and students in the school or at home, tablet computers that can record photographs, video, audio, and project educational presentations, or digital and video cameras that can record pictures or video and post to websites or social networking sites.

**Internet Access** - Teachers and students both utilize the internet on a daily basis. Internet resources can be used to check local or national news stories, conduct research projects, plan upcoming field-trips or educational tours/trips, study for class assignments, tests, quizzes, exams, etc. However, at the same time, internet access allows students to access thousands of inappropriate websites that have nothing to do with education. Some schools utilize computer internet access blocking software to limit which sites students can visit. Teachers should work with their school technology staff to make sure that computer equipment is properly maintained and used for approved educational purposes only.

**Digital, cell phone, and video cameras** - Devices such as digital cameras, video cameras, and cell phones can all be used to record still images and video footage. We have already discussed the use of cell phones for communications purposes. In this section we will look at the use of cell phone cameras to record and disseminate still and video images.

Most schools own and allow students to use digital technology for school related projects and assignments. However, these digital recording devices can, and have been used to record inappropriate images, student, and teacher behavior. Digital and video camera use should be limited to responsible students at all times. Teachers should monitor use of the equipment so that they know who had access and when they used the equipment. Digital recording devices should be checked after each use to make sure that no inappropriate images were recorded and all storage devices have been erased.

**Tablet Computers** - Tablet computers such as the Apple iPad, Kindle, or Nook are becoming more and more available and used in educational settings. Students own and use personal iPads, Kindles and Nooks for classroom assignments, taking notes, recording digital images (pictures or video), or reading books. The ethical responsibilities when using these devices are no different than other computer equipment such as desktop and laptop computers. They provide students with internet access and digital recording capabilities that can be used for inappropriate activities. Teachers should monitor tablet use by students in their classrooms to make sure they are using them for educationally approved purposes only.

**Technology Use Recommendations** - The following are recommendations for the use of computer technology in educational environments:

- ➡ Students using computer equipment should be supervised at all times.
- ➡ Students should only use digital cameras or video cameras for educational purposes associated with the curriculum.
- ➡ Teachers should have all computer equipment password protected so no unauthorized use of computer technology by students or anyone else is allowed.

- ⇒ Teachers should monitor student use of computers, especially when students are using internet resources or browsing internet websites.
- ⇒ Teachers should work with the school technology officer to limit internet access to school-approved websites.
- ⇒ Teachers should monitor student use of Facebook or other social networking sites (SNSs) and remove any inappropriate comments, photographs, etc.
- ⇒ Teachers who serve as club advisors should not post computer or Facebook passwords for all students to use. Teachers should limit access to post club information on Facebook to selected students.
- ⇒ Teachers should monitor student use of digital or video cameras to make sure they are not taking inappropriate photographs or video.

### **Teacher ~ Student Interactions - Summary**

Teachers and students interact on a daily basis. Teacher~student interaction is the basis for the teaching and learning process. As a professional, it is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that these interactions are conducted on a professional~ethical basis that protects the students at all times.

All teachers should be aware of how their actions can be interpreted. They should review the policies set by their school and their own actions to determine if they are providing a safe, secure, learning environment in the classroom, in the community, or while on school-sponsored trips and activities.

## **Fiduciary Responsibilities of Teachers**

Fiduciary is defined as “one who holds a fiduciary relation or acts in a fiduciary capacity, a: held or founded in trust or confidence, b: holding in trust, c: depending on public confidence for value or currency.” Teachers are often called upon to serve as advisors to youth organizations, student clubs, etc. In many instances, this service as an advisor carries with it the responsibility to handle the financial funds of the organization. These funds may be held in an account at a local bank or with the school district’s financial secretary in central administration. Club funds can range from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars. Club fund raising activities can generate large sums of money that need to be handled in an ethical and responsible manner.

Teachers and club advisors must take specific steps to guarantee that club funds are handled in a responsible and ethical manner. The following are some recommendations for the proper handling of financial funds:

- \$ No one person should have exclusive access to, or handle club funds.
- \$ The club treasurer and club advisor should work together to handle all funds.
- \$ Club funds and school department funds should never be intermingled in one account.
- \$ The club treasurer should utilize the following tools for the proper handling of funds:
  - a. Checking account (local bank or school district account)
  - b. Checking account register
  - c. Numbered receipt book
  - d. Bank statements
  - e. Accounts receivable file
  - f. Accounts payable file
  - g. Bank deposit slip file
  - h. Financial computer program (e.g. Quicken, Quick Books)

- \$ Cash collected from fundraising activities should be under the control of two people at all times.
- \$ Whenever possible, prenumbered receipts should be issued for all funds coming into the club.
- \$ All funds (cash or checks) should be deposited into a bank account as soon as possible after it is received.
- \$ All distributions should be made by check with supporting documentation (receipt) kept for each disbursement.
- \$ Two signatures should be required on all checks.
- \$ Bank statements should be reconciled every month.
- \$ A Treasurer's report should be given at all club meetings (at least once per month).

At no time should the Teacher/Advisor be in complete control of the funds for a club. The teacher/advisor should work closely with the club treasurer to properly handle all income and distribution of funds to ensure that funds are properly handled at all times.

## **Youth Protection**

The following section will cover ways that teachers can promote youth protection in their classrooms, the school, and during extra-curricular activities. Some of what will be covered are common-sense recommendations, some are legal responsibilities teachers have as professionals who work with youth on a daily basis.

### **Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection**

Education isn't the only profession that has faced ethical leadership challenges. Religious institutions and youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts of American and Girl Scouts have all been challenged with improving youth protection and educating their employees and volunteers on ethical behavior while working with children.

**Two-Deep Leadership** - The Boy Scouts of America has developed a structured Youth Protection training program to educate all adult volunteers on the proper techniques for working with youth and protecting them from harm at all times. One of the policies of BSA Youth Protection is Two-Deep Leadership. The basis of this policy is that no adult leader should be alone with a youth, other than his/her son, on a one-on-one basis at any time. The following are just some of the components of the Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection Policy:

- § Two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or other adult must be present at all scout activities at all times. One adult must be 21 years of age.
- § One-on-one contact between adults and Scouts is prohibited. In situations which require personal conferences (Scoutmaster's Conference), the meeting must be conducted in view of other adults and youth.

- § Separate accommodations for adults and Scouts required - no youth is permitted to sleep in a tent of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian.
- § Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, or digital devices prohibited.
- § No hazing - physical hazing and initiations are prohibited.
- § No bullying - verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited in Scouting.

**Three R's** - The Boy Scouts of America also follow the "Three R's" of youth protection.

These Three R's convey a simple message to youth members:

- **Recognize** situations that place you at risk of being molested, how child molesters operate, and that anyone can be a molester.
- **Resist** unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.
- **Report** attempted or actual molestation to a parent or other trusted adult. This prevents abuse and helps to protect other children.

These same three steps are very appropriate for teachers and other school personnel.

Teachers should recognize when a potential unethical situation exists. They should resist the opportunity to cross ethical boundaries and develop inappropriate relationships with students. If a teacher is faced with a potentially unethical situation he/she should report it to their administration immediately.

Another policy promoted by the Boy Scouts of America is the Buddy System. The Buddy System states that no Scout should be alone during any activity. Scouts are divided into groups of two so that they all have a "buddy" during activities, trips, hikes, etc. A Scout is taught that he is never to leave his buddy. This policy, combined with the adult Two-Deep Leadership policy, was established to make sure that no one-Scout will be alone with a single adult at any time. Also, two



Scouts are far less likely to get lost or in dangerous situations. The two-deep leadership policy and the buddy system could easily be incorporated into any school-based activity.

**Recommendations** - Below are a few recommendations for incorporating these ideas into educational settings:

- # No one-on-one meetings between a teacher and a student.
- # No closed-door meetings between a teacher and a student.
- # Another teacher, school staff member, administrator, etc. should sit in on all meetings between a student and a teacher if possible.
- # Teachers may meet and work with groups of students in a public place like an open classroom, laboratory, greenhouse, etc.
- # Students should be divided up into pairs and identify a buddy prior to all school-sponsored trips.

### **Student Safety**

Teachers interact with kindergarten children from 5 years of age through high school youth 18 years of age. It is vitally important that teachers understand the ethical and legal ramifications of dealing with youth and young adults in educational situations. This section will review specific aspects of working with youth and discuss policies that should be established to protect both the youth and the teachers from unethical and/or illegal situations.

**Minors < 18 years of age** - For the most part, teachers work with minors who have not had their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and are therefore not of legal age. Any situation in which a teacher finds himself/herself has both ethical and legal implications because youth under 18 years are minors. Teachers can be charged with a variety of different crimes for interacting with minors in unethical and illegal ways. Teachers have been arrested, charged, tried, and convicted of crimes such as:

- ✘ Contributing to the delinquency of a minor
- ✘ Criminal sexual conduct
- ✘ Unlawful sexual relations with a minor
- ✘ Sexual imposition
- ✘ Sexual battery
- ✘ Pandering sexual-oriented material involving a minor
- ✘ Child endangerment
- ✘ Providing alcohol to a minor
- ✘ Importuning and corrupting a minor

**Students > 18 years of age** - In some cases, teachers have high school senior students in their classrooms who may have already reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. While these individuals may be viewed as legal adults in the eyes of the law, they are still viewed as students in the eyes of society and the educational system. Therefore, the laws governing relationships between teachers and 18 year old students are not as clear. Some states disregard the students age if they are still enrolled in school. Teachers can still be charged with crimes if it is proven that they had inappropriate relationships with 18 year old senior students who have yet to graduate from school.

**Physical Contact** - Physical contact between teachers and students is an area that must be addressed. Teachers strive to develop rapport with their students and make them feel welcome in their classrooms. As a way to show leadership and respect, some teachers will greet their students at the classroom door with a professional handshake each day. Teachers regularly pat students on the back or shoulder to convey the message “job well done.”

However, physical touching can make some students uncomfortable. Placing ones hand on a students neck, back, leg, etc. can give the impression of familiarity and closeness. Many teachers will congratulate students at sporting events or other competitive activities with a hug. The nature of the situation may make a congratulatory hug completely appropriate.

Any type of physical contact between a teacher and a student may be completely innocuous, but it may be very unwelcome on the part of the student. Therefore, teachers should be very careful with any physical contact.

**Sexual Harassment** - High school students of both sexes are growing and maturing throughout their high school years. In many cases, male teachers will interact with female students and female teachers will interact with male students. If a teacher does not maintain a professional teacher~student relationship, these interactions can sometimes devolve into joking, childish, and personal relationships. Students may change their perception of their teacher from one of teacher~mentor, to a close personal friend.

Teachers who allow a relationship to change into one of friendship may allow it to evolve into an interpersonal caring, or sexual relationship. For the past several years, there have been many news reports of both male and female teachers developing sexual relationships with one of their students. In some cases, student accusations have been proven false. But in most cases, the relationships are investigated, charges are filed, and teachers are convicted of a variety of different crimes because of their relationship with their student.

Teachers should maintain a professional ethical leader relationship with all of their students. The following are recommendations related to inappropriate relationships with students:

- ☐ Do not meet with any student one-on-one in school or out of school at any time.
- ☐ Do not communicate with a student about personal issues in school or out of school at any time.
- ☐ Do not touch a student in a sexually suggestive manner at any time.
- ☐ If a student approaches you, the teacher, report the contact immediately to your school administration.
- ☐ Do not allow students to meet at your house, attend social gatherings, or reside in your residence.
- ☐ Do not attend any social gathering with students at which alcoholic beverages are served.

- ❑ If you, the teacher, become aware of any student activity that involves inappropriate relationships, alcohol, substance abuse, etc. report it to the school administration immediately.

**Hazing** - Cases of hazing have unfortunately been reported in high schools and universities across the country. High school students in clubs, sports teams, youth groups, and even gangs have been exposed to hazing activities in order to join these groups. Most schools have established strong anti-hazing and anti-bullying policies. As a teacher, you have an ethical responsibility to report any cases of hazing that you become aware of through your work in an educational institution.

**Alcohol and Drug Abuse** - Alcohol and drug usage among high school students is present in most schools. Teachers often become aware of alcohol and drug abuse through their daily interactions with students. Students who are themselves abusing alcohol or drugs can usually be identified by a knowledgeable teacher trained to observe this type of behavior. Teachers have a moral responsibility to report any incidence of alcohol or drug abuse that comes to their attention.

Most schools have established a strong policy on alcohol and drug abuse by students. Students found to be in violation of these policies can be suspended or expelled from school. In some cases, teachers themselves have succumbed to alcohol and drug abuse. Some teachers have unfortunately allowed these personal behaviors to affect their professional careers.

**Child Abuse and Molestation** - Child abuse can take on many different forms and situations. Child abuse can be in the form of physical abuse such as hitting, punching, etc. It can also be in the form of emotional abuse. Teachers are professionals in the community who should be

knowledgeable and cognizant of this type of behavior within the community. Teachers have a moral and ethical responsibility to report any suspected cases of child abuse or molestation. In some cases, students may reach out and confide in a teacher that they have been abused or molested. In these cases, teachers should take immediate steps to seek help from school and community professionals to protect the student from future abuse.

Most states regard teachers in the same category with doctors, nurses, police, fire, and medical services when it comes to reporting suspected case of child abuse. In most states, teachers are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse to the authorities.

The current case of a retired football coach from Pennsylvania State University is directly related to reporting suspected cases of child molestation. An assistant football coach witnessed a retired football coach allegedly molesting a child in a football training facility. While a report was made to his immediate superiors at the university, no official report of the incident was ever made to police authorities. The case is currently being tried in the courts.

Teachers have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect students at all times. Teachers should avoid putting students in uncomfortable or compromising situations such as touching, hugging, providing alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, participating in sexual harassment or developing sexual relationships with students.

### **Volunteers in Career-Technical Education**

Most schools invite parents, alumni, and local citizens to support and become involved in the school by serving as volunteers. Volunteers can be used in schools in many different ways, including:

- ▲ Coaches for competitive event teams (career development events).
- ▲ Assistant coaches for athletic teams
- ▲ Classroom aides
- ▲ Chaperones on field-trips
- ▲ Chaperones on overnight trips to regional, state, or national events.
- ▲ Advisory Committee members
- ▲ Alumni or booster club volunteers

No matter how volunteers are used, they can be a great benefit to any school, classroom, or career-technical education program. However, volunteers should be managed properly by a school district to make sure they benefit the school and do not possess any additional problems for teachers or school administrators.

**Volunteer Management** - Many schools now require that any adult who wishes to volunteer within the school to complete a formal registration process, provide references, be photographed, and receive an identification badge that must be worn whenever they are volunteering at school activities.

**Criminal Background Checks** - In addition to a formal registration process, a volunteer may be required to complete a criminal background check including having fingerprints taken and submitted to police authorities. Background checks are being used to ensure that no convict, sexual predator, or child molester is allowed to serve as a volunteer within a school district or have contact with children at any time.

**Chaperones** - In many cases, parents volunteer to serve as chaperones on school-sponsored trips. These trips can sometimes be for several days to a week in duration. Any adult volunteering to serve as a chaperone should be approved by the school administration prior to the trip. They

should be required to complete any formal registration and criminal background checks required for other volunteers in the school district. If the volunteer chaperones are going to be driving any vehicle (car, van, bus, etc.) that will transport students, they should have all the legal licenses required by the state and meet any requirements established by the school district.

As was stated earlier, there should be no one-on-one contact between adult chaperones and a student. Teachers and chaperones should follow the Two-Deep Leadership policy that there must always be two adults at any meeting, activity, or event on any trip.

If the school trip includes both male and female students, there should be both male and female chaperones. However, at no time should a chaperone enter a student's hotel room or have the student enter their hotel room. All meetings should be held in public areas or hotel meeting rooms open to the public.

## **Teacher Certification**

Individuals work years to reach their goal of becoming a certified/licensed educator. They complete teacher preparation programs or alternative certification requirements in order to be certified/licensed by the state to be hired as a classroom teacher. However, poor decision making, unethical or even illegal behavior can ruin a career in an instant. Teachers, like any other citizen, are innocent until proven guilty and are entitled to due process of the law. But even an allegation of inappropriate behavior, whether the truth or a lie, can cause irreparable harm to a teacher's reputation and future career prospects. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that teachers demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors at all times.

### **Investigation Process**

If a teacher does cross the line and exhibits unethical or criminal behavior they will be subject to a legal process that may include the following stages:

- Allegation of inappropriate, unethical, or illegal behavior.
- Report to school administrators, Superintendent, and School Board.
- Report to local police authorities if allegations involve illegal behavior.
- Report to State Department of Education or Professional Standards Commission officials.
- Investigations by school, police, or State Department of Education officials.
- Removal from the classroom and placed on paid or unpaid administrative leave during the investigation.
- If the investigation warrants, formal criminal charges may be filed.



## **Teachers' Union Legal Representation**

Teachers who are members of local, state, and national teachers unions (American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association), may seek legal representation from their union/association officials. State teachers unions very often have legal counsel on staff or a legal firm on retainer to represent teachers who have been accused of inappropriate, unethical, or illegal behavior.

## **Final Disposition**

The investigation and legal process can take from weeks to months before it is completed. If formal criminal charges are filed, the legal process may extend for several months or even a year. No matter what the final outcome, being accused of unethical conduct, being investigated by school authorities, police investigators, and state department of education officials can ruin a teacher's career.

If a teacher is convicted of criminal behavior, the State Department of Education will revoke a teacher's certification/license so they will not be able to teach again in the future. Even if criminal charges are not filed, or if the teacher is not convicted, State Department of Education and Professional Standards Commission officials may still find that the teacher violated the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators and revoke a teachers certification/license.

## **Case Studies**

The following section includes real-life case studies of inappropriate, unethical, and illegal behavior by education professionals. These case studies were obtained from broadcast, print, and

internet news reports, personal communications with state education officials, and reports solicited from classroom teachers and teacher educators from across the country.

Some of the case studies include the results of the criminal investigation and final disposition regarding the teacher's credentials. Some of the cases are still being investigated and have yet to have formal charges files or court trials completed. To protect both the innocent and those found guilty, no teachers names or school districts have been reported. These case studies are included so that the reader can see the nature of inappropriate, unethical, and illegal behavior occurring in educational institutions and the end result of investigations. Each of these case studies can be related back to the Code of Ethics for Professional Educators and the recommendations outlined in this handbook.

The case studies that follow include classroom teachers, career-technical educators, agriculture teachers, athletic coaches, and school administrators. Accusations of inappropriate, unethical, or illegal behavior is not limited to any one group of education professionals. While the overwhelming majority of education professionals are moral, upstanding, ethical educational leaders, the cases of unethical and illegal behavior continue to be reported on a regular basis.

Teachers need to be aware that if they violate the sacred trust, if they violate their Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, if they cross the line into criminal behavior, their actions will be revealed, investigated, and they will probably lose their career, their teaching credential, and in some cases their freedom.

## **Case Studies of Inappropriate, Unethical, or Illegal Behavior**

1. A 26-year old global studies teacher from New York was reassigned to an administrative position after she was observed engaged in inappropriate behavior with an 18-year old senior. Photos on her Facebook profile show her double-fisting beers, partying with cigarettes tucked behind her ear and drinking out of a beer bong. She would face no criminal charges because the student is not a minor. But she faces disciplinary action from the Department of Education if investigators decide that she and the student were romantically involved. The teacher-union contract states misconduct with a student is defined as “sexual touching” or “action that could reasonably be interpreted as soliciting as sexual relationship.” (NY Post, 5/30/12)
2. A student in agricultural education was working in the agricultural mechanics shop, stripping off bolts from a tractor. The agriculture instructor asked the student to quit and clean up. The student responded by saying, “\*\*\*\*\* off.” The teacher then threw a wrench at the student, hitting the student in the head.
3. While on a school sponsored trip, a female teacher took students to a local shopping mall. The teacher tried on clothes at Victoria’s Secret while being video-taped by students. Students showed the video-tape to school administrators when they returned from the trip.
4. Two female teachers at separate schools purchased alcohol for students while on a school sponsored trip.
5. A male teacher was using school metal shop facilities to build and sell trailers. The teacher was using school materials and equipment to build the trailers then selling them and personally keeping the proceeds from the sale. The teacher was fired.

6. A 31-year old teacher from a private school in Ohio posted on her Facebook profile that during the past month she has been married, gotten drunk, smoked cigarettes, taken drugs and gone skinny-dipping. The teachers union recommended getting rid of web profiles. A flier from the teachers union pointed out that anything on social media sites can be used as evidence in disciplinary hearings by district and state department of education officials.
7. An agriculture teacher often took students to his 40-acre farm. In 2005, one student reported the teacher rubbed lotion on her when they sunbathed. A second student said that in 2003, the teacher had her wear a white t-shirt and step into a kiddie pool. She said he then splashed water on her chest. Investigators could not substantiate that either incident was sexual, although the students said he touched them. The state suspended the teacher's license until 2012, but he could return to the classroom two years earlier if he seeks counseling.
8. A high school English teacher befriended a small group of high school students, bought liquor for them and hosted parties at her apartment. At least once, the students watched pornography while at her apartment. While investigating, police found that the teacher had sex with one of the boys. She was found guilty of three counts of sexual battery and sentenced to five years probation and labeled a sexual offender. Her license was revoked.
9. A business and computer teacher and assistant football coach developed a sexual relationship with a 16-year old cheerleader. He set up a special email account for her to write him. He pled guilty to four counts of sexual battery and was placed on five years probation. His license was revoked.
10. A speech and drama teacher was staying with a family during the week of a school play because he lived 45 minutes away from the school. One morning a male family member discovered a video camera hidden in the shower curtain. The teacher was found guilty of disorderly conduct and lost his job. He tried to save his license by pleading that what happened was not related to education, nor his career as a teacher whatsoever. In fact,

nothing actually transpired, and there were no victims. Furthermore, the camera didn't even work. The state revoked his license.

11. A superintendent used his authority to call female students out of class to drink and use drugs with him. The superintendent plead guilty to corrupting another with drugs, intimidation of a victim and possession of cocaine. He was sentenced to five years in prison and surrendered his superintendent's license.
12. A teacher did not have his office computer password protected. He allowed students to use his computer unsupervised. Some students found a picture of a student-teacher who was working in the program. They used photoshop to alter the photo to show the student-teacher engaged in an inappropriate sexual activity. They saved the altered picture on the computer, emailed it to other people, printed it off, and posted it around the classroom.
13. A female spouse of a male teacher was volunteering as a chaperone on a school sponsored trip. During the trip the female spouse purchased alcohol for students and engaged in sexual relations with a male student. The incident resulted in a divorce and the male teacher leaving his position.
14. A student organization had a Facebook page. A female student officer posted inappropriate comments about a male student officer after the two ended a relationship. The teacher received a reprimand from the board of education for not monitoring the Facebook page and deleting the inappropriate comments.
15. A former teacher was serving as a chaperone for a school-sponsored trip. He allowed a female student to shower in his hotel room. Another student then found a small video camera concealed in the bathroom that was being used to video the female student while showering. The former teacher was charged with video voyeurism and destruction, alternation or concealment of evidence. He was sentenced to incarceration and five years probation.

16. A 41-year old teacher taught business and computers for 15 years and advised the Future Business Leaders of America club. The teacher developed a relationship with one of his female students. He left his wife and children and moved into an apartment with the 18 year old student. An investigation found 8,000 text messages between the teacher and the student including 32 texts in one day beginning at 6:00 am. The student turned 18 years of age in September of her senior year. Police say that makes her a consenting adult. However, there was an ongoing investigation of the relationship. Teacher Association officials stated that the union offers training about lines teachers should not cross, even with adult students. The official stated, "In the teacher-student relationship, there's a professional expectation that doesn't stop at age 18."
17. Two agriculture teachers at one school were reassigned to different school sites after an investigation. School Information Services Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistant Team found poor internal controls of finances. These included having the booster club and district accounts co-mingled, with fundraiser revenues deposited into booster accounts despite the funds being generated by student participation and district resources.
18. Western Kentucky University's president has used Facebook to lecture students about social networking etiquette, and officials persuaded Twitter to briefly shut down a parody account dripping with sarcasm and criticism of the university. Officials deny charges of censorship, but observers say the school appears to have immersed itself in social media deeper than many others around the country. Any new policy also raises the question of whether a school could limit what students post when they're off campus and not using school equipment. Many schools have anti-cyberbullying policies, but most of those apply only to school-owned servers and equipment.

19. Petrino dumped by Arkansas: In a swift and stunning fall, Arkansas football coach Bobby Petrino was fired Tuesday night by athletic director Jeff Long, who said Petrino “knowingly misled” the university and engaged in reckless behavior during his relationship with a female football office employee half his age. (USA Today, 4/11/12, p. C1)
  
20. High School Teacher Facing Felony Sex Charges: Merced County prosecutors have filed felony charges against a 27-year old high school agriculture teacher accused of having a sexual relationship with one of her male students. The Sheriff’s Department launched its investigation in March after rumors began circulating at the school and staff notified law enforcement. According to the sheriff’s report, the boy, who is now 17 years old, frequented the suspect’s home and claimed they had sex more than 50 times. When the relationship started, the student had started “hanging out” at the defendant’s house after school, doing yardwork, according to the sheriff’s report. Many high school students said the illicit relationship was no secret on campus, even long before the sheriff’s investigation began in March. Under the state’s mandatory reporting law, educators must report child abuse or neglect to law enforcement within 36 hours of receiving the information. (Merced Sun Star, 6/2/12)

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This handbook was developed to introduce the topic of ethical conduct for Idaho professional-technical teachers. We have discussed the importance of the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, ethics, morality, and professionalism of teachers. Teacher~Student interactions were reviewed and recommendations were made regarding communicating with students, school-sponsored trips, supervisory project visits, and the use of technology by teachers and students.

Youth Protection practices for student safety, two-deep leadership policies, and the use of volunteers in educational settings were presented. Finally, teacher certification, investigations, and the legal processes were reviewed. Twenty case studies were presented of actual cases of inappropriate, unethical, or illegal behavior.

Teachers should use this handbook and conduct a complete review of their behavior, school policy, and youth protection practices implemented in their school districts. Teachers should discuss these issues with parents, advisory committees, and school administrators so that everyone works together to make youth protection a key component to all school related activities. Teachers should also make recommendations to improve youth protection within their classrooms, laboratories, and extra-curricular activities so that the chances of inappropriate, unethical, or illegal behavior on the part of teachers, school staff, or other educational professionals is reduced or eliminated. All educational professionals have a moral and ethical responsibility to make every effort to protect children and youth at all times.



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Appendix I

Code of Ethics  
for  
Idaho Professional Educators

Appendix II

National Education Association

Code of Ethics



# Code of Ethics

## **Preamble**

The National Education Association believes that the education profession consists of one education workforce serving the needs of all students and that the term educator's includes education support professionals.

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than the one specifically designated by the NEA or its affiliates.

## **PRINCIPLE I**

### **Commitment to the Student**

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator--

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.

2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view.
3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly--
  - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program
  - b. Deny benefits to any student
  - c. Grant any advantage to any student
7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

## **PRINCIPLE II**

### **Commitment to the Profession**

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator--

1. Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
2. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.

3. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
5. Shall not assist a noneducator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
6. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
7. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
8. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.

*Adopted by the NEA 1975 Representative Assembly*

Appendix III

Association for  
Career & Technical Education

Code of Ethics



## Code of Ethics

The career and technical educator believes in the worth and dignity of each individual and in the value of career and technical education in enhancing individual development. Consequently, career and technical educators strive for the highest ethical standards to merit the respect and confidence of students, colleagues and the community. They use their skills and knowledge to develop each of their students or colleagues to maximize human potential. This statement provides a framework by which to guide career and technical educators and the institutions through which they work in attaining the highest degree of professionalism.

With respect to self, the career and technical educator:

- Represents personal and professional qualifications in a true and accurate manner.
- Maintains confidentiality of students and colleagues except where disclosure is compelled by law or to serve a compelling professional need.
- Bases professional action and decisions upon sound, objective rationale without influence of favors, gifts, or personal or political advantage.
- Recognizes and accepts responsibility for individual actions, judgments and decisions.
- Strives throughout one's career to master, maintain and improve professional competence through study, work, travel and exploration.
- Contributes to the growing body of specialized knowledge, concepts and skills that characterize career and technical education.
- Strives for the advancement of career and technical education, upholds its honor and dignity, and works to strengthen it in the community, state and nation.
- Participates actively in the work of professional organizations to define and improve standards of career and technical education preparation and service.



- Establishes and maintains conditions of employment conducive to providing high-quality career and technical education.
- Prepares carefully as a teacher so instruction is accurate, current, objective and scholarly, and designed to enhance the students' individual capabilities.
- Exercises professional judgment in presenting, interpreting and critiquing ideas, including controversial issues.
- Joins with other professionals whose mission is to improve the delivery of career and technical education to the nation's citizens.

With respect to others, the career and technical educator:

- Uses individual competence as a principal criterion in accepting delegated responsibilities and assigning duties to others.
- Provides statements about a colleague or student in a fair, objective manner without embarrassment or ridicule.
- Provides educational and/or career options to all students or colleagues.
- Evaluates students and colleagues without regard to race, color, creed, sex, status or any other factor unrelated to the need for career and technical education,
  - allows any student or colleague to participate in the program who can benefit from the program and
  - provides the same benefits or advantages to all students or colleagues in the program.
- Respects the rights and reputations of the students and colleagues with whom one works, and the institution with which one is affiliated.
- Acts to safeguard the health and safety of students and colleagues against incompetent, unethical or illegal behavior of any person, whether student or colleague.
- Promotes admission to the profession of persons who are fully qualified because of character, education and experience, according to legally established criteria and standards.

- Exercises professional judgment in the choice of teaching methods and materials appropriate to the needs and interests of each student.
- Influences effectively the formation of policies and procedures that affect one's professional work.

# Appendix IV

## Identifying & Reporting Professional Misconduct

Florida Department of Education  
Office of Professional Practices  
Services